

TOGETHER IN DEPLOYMENT

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PRACTICAL PREPARATION

- Discuss, understand, come to agreement re finances, will, P.O.A., emergency plan for children if remaining parent disabled.
- Work out a budget together: agreement on spending, bonus pay & expenses due to deployment, plan for paying bills, home & car maintenance.
- Organize important documents for easy access.
- Consider separate checking accounts to avoid confusion.
- "Man list" – identify help for various household & car repairs.

PREPARING THE DEPLOYING SPOUSE/PARENT (d.p.)

- Choose a regular date night before/ after deployment and/or take a get-away trip.
- Make time for extra intimacy.
- Synchronize watches to set up times of shared long distance prayer, devotions, journaling at the same time each day when possible.
- Decide on choices of prayer, Scripture, devotional booklets, etc.
- Write notes for deploying parent./ spouse to take with them.
- Make tapes/ videos of children for d.p. to take.
- Locks of hair.
- St. Michael medallion/ prayer.
- Photo album/ multi-picture frame.
- Decide on method(s) of communication (letters, e-mail, phone, etc.).
- Share feelings: Do not assume how each other feels.

PREPARING THE REMAINING SPOUSE

- Refer to Preparing deploying spouse; most are applicable for the remaining spouse.
- Spend time with support group before deployment.
- 6:6 rule: Deploying spouse will allow remaining spouse one hour of their own time away from the house for every month of the deployment.
- Begin prep. for homecoming.
- If necessary, ask extended family/ friends to allow the family/couple space before and after deployment.

PREPARING CHILDREN

- Parents establish basic rules to remain in place before, during, & after deployment.
- Remain a parent more than a best friend.
- Family meetings before, during & after to discuss issues.
- Prepare children for deployment at their level of understanding.
- Have family activities (picnics, fishing, slumber parties, pizza nights, vacations, etc.) to create good memories to hold on to.
- Special individual "dates" with d.p. and each individual child
- Allow/ assist each child to make a wish list of activities.
- Start a plant or garden with d.p. to be tended by children during deployment, perhaps blooming/ bearing when parent returns.
- Prepare cards & notes to children from d.p. for "dry spells" when parent unable to communicate. Make audio/ video recordings of stories, etc. of d.p. to play for children. Build a Bear- voice recording of d.p.
- Make pillow cases, t-shirts with picture of d.p./ children for children and d.p.
- Develop a "code book" so kids and d.p. can exchange coded messages.
- Prepare small photo album for d.p. to take.
- Post map of where d.p. will be, leave it up, learn about culture/language of that area.
- Have a family photo wall for children to make associations during deployment.
- Establish deployment calendar with estimated time of homecoming.
- Make paper chain and remove a link each day.
- Kids and d.p, cook together, d.p. leaves notes to kids on back of recipe cards that kids can read when they cook during deployment.
- Start individual e-mail accounts for children to communicate with d.p.
- Celebrate holidays before deployment.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES DURING DEPLOYMENT

- Review map/calendar/ chain every day.
- Daily prayer routine for d.p./ daily intention slips.
- Make a scrapbook of activities during deployment.